



Responses to Questions and Comments Regarding Park/Access Development Plan for Idlewild Lake, Yates Township, Lake County

1. Question/ Comment:

What is the purpose of the park? Why is the development project being enforced on the Idlewild community?

Response: The purpose of the park/access is for the DNR to invest in the Idlewild community by providing a low level, quiet park setting with access to the lake for users of all ages and mobility levels.

2. Question/ Comments:

Who will operate and maintain this site?

Response: The DNR, Parks and Recreation Division, which operates hundreds of access sites throughout the State, will operate and maintain this site.

3. Question/ Comment:

Does the DNR care about the concerns of the Idlewild community? What action does the DNR take to make sure that majority of the Idlewild community's needs are met?

Response: The DNR is strongly in support of the Idlewild community and transformation initiatives. The park project is DNR's opportunity to invest in the community and provide a nice place for generations of community members and visitors to use. This plan is a reflection of the comments received from community members at numerous public meetings.

4. Question / Comment:

Can a personal call be made to each Idlewild homeowner about upcoming meetings; what steps are being taken to better inform the public about scheduled meetings; and how is one informed about the current events in Idlewild related to the project?

Response: At this time the resources are not available to call each homeowner. Every effort is made to place meeting times in the papers, in the post office, and Township offices. Notices are also sent to property owners through their tax bills

5. Question/Comment:

Does the Idlewild community have the opportunity to make changes to the Lake Idlewild Park/Access Development Plan?

Response: Yes. Public comments have been, and are being, taken into consideration for revisions to the plan. Revisions so far include: parking to be moved to the north, further away from adjacent property owners; a small welcome shelter may added by the parking to allow someone to get out of the weather for a short time; at this time no lighting will be added as the park will be closed at dusk.

6. Question/ Comments:

Where does the funding come from?

Response: Funding for the project comes from a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Michigan State Waterways Fund. The Trust Fund utilizes monies from mineral, oil and gas extraction revenues on state-owned lands. The Waterways Fund collects money from marine fuel taxes, boat registrations, and user fees.

7. Question/ Comment:

Why not use the grant money to clean the lake?

Response: This grant for the park/access project is from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and was given to the State to improve the State property based on the plan. The grant can not be used for a different reason.

8. Question/ Comments:

Is there grant money available to construct an access site at another location?

Response: There are grant opportunities available to local communities to provide for both engineering design services and construction of boating access sites on public land.

9. Question/ Comments:

Why spend money on a project when the state is under a budget deficit?

Response: The money used to develop this site is designated specifically for boating and park development through the Natural Resources Trust Fund. This money has no bearing on the state's operating costs or tax dollars, referred to as general funds.

10. Question/ Comments:

Why didn't the DNR use the money to fix up Williams Island?

Response: Land must be owned by the agency applying for the grant. Yates Township, who administers Williams Island, did not apply for the grant funds.

11. Question/ Comment:

Why not repair only the structures that were already present at the lake, such as the current boat launch?

Response: The DNR repaired and replaced the skid pier at Williams Island in 2008. The current launch property on Williams Island is not owned by the State of Michigan, so repairs cannot be made by the State with the Trust Fund allocated monies. The site would qualify for grants if the community were to apply.

12. Question/ Comments:

Why build this access on such a small and shallow lake?

Response: To provide recreation opportunities and barrier free access to Michigan citizens and the people of Idlewild. Lake Idlewild has a depth of approximately 22 feet; deep enough to support a variety of boating use. The lake is also 105 acres in size, with over 3.7 miles of shoreline. Lake Idlewild is the fifth largest lake in a county with over 100 lakes.

13. Question/ Comment:

During the summer will the water be too low for a boat to successfully pass through? Should the access site be relocated?

Response: The boats that will be placed in the water at this site will only need 4 – 6" of water. If needed, the boater can walk the boat to deeper water in very low water times. This type of access does well in quiet waters such as this site. Motorboats can not be launched from this site.

14. Question/ Comments:

This is a natural area, why does this land need to be developed?

Response: Community residents have asked for public amenities that will encourage public visitations, economic development and discourage trespassing enroute to the lakeshore. This development will enhance the natural features of the area.

15. Question/ Comments:

Have threatened and endangered species been reviewed?

Response: Yes, the Michigan Natural Features Inventory database was reviewed and no known localities for rare or protected species were found on, or in the immediate vicinity of, the site.

16. Question/ Comment:

What is being done to protect the wildlife area that surrounds Lake Idlewild, especially the bald eagle habitat?

Response: Site visits, as recent as July 14, 2008, have not revealed any evidence of American bald eagle nesting. The average bald eagle nest is five foot in diameter and very visible. Few if any of the trees on the property are large enough to be attractive to eagles for nesting and they most often prefer more secluded locations.

17. Question/ Comments:

How will the fish in Lake Idlewild be affected by this access?

Response: Due to the minimal size of this carry-down access site, and the smaller boats using this access (canoes, kayaks, etc.), the anticipated effect is negligible.

18. Question/ Comments:

What about the introduction of invasive species into Lake Idlewild from boats?

Response: Any potential increase in invasive species risk from this site is negligible. The risk from invasive species has been present for some time already, due to existing public access sites on the lake.

19. Question/ Comments:

Is the DNR subject to the same permit requirements as private citizens, for the construction of access sites?

Response: Yes, the DNR receives the same permit application screening, review, and assessment by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ).

20. Question/ Comments:

How will silt be controlled during and after construction?

Response: As a part of the site design and construction process, both temporary (fabric fence) and permanent (grass) soil erosion and sediment control measures will be used.

21. Question/ Comment:

Will this site be barrier free and comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?

Response: Yes, the site will meet ADA including providing accessible parking, an accessible vault toilet, a pier, and accessible routes between these elements.

22. Question/ Comments:

What is the time frame for completion of this project?

Response: Engineering is anticipated for fall 2008 with construction to follow in 2009.

23. Question / Comment:

Will a park destroy the tranquility of the area by attracting more people to the site?

Response: The site is designed to be a tranquil spot for walking, fishing and paddle type boats. Only five parking spaces are included in the plan, and no picnic structures.

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24. Question/ Comments:

Will there be an option to place a play structure in the design?

Response: At this time the park is not designed for active play such as a play structure. Walking, fishing, quiet viewing and water access for a canoe type of boat is planned. If a play structure is desired by the community at a later date, grants may be applied for or monies raised by Friends of the park.

25. Question/ Comments:

Can we have a picnic pavilion?

Response: The intent for this area is for passive recreation and a small carry-down boat access. Construction of a public pavilion may draw large crowds, which is not preferred by the community at this location.

26. Question/ Comments:

Can you dredge behind the Flamingo Club?

Response: The grant monies do not include the area behind the Club and so the DNR would not be permitted to dredge there. The DNR can only dredge on property under their ownership/administration. The community would be able to apply for a grant to dredge behind the Club.

28. Question/ Comments:

Will there be a band shell/shelter for concerts?

Response: This area is intended as a small park with carry-down boat access and would not accommodate large numbers of people for concerts. Williams Island is more suitable for this activity.

29. Question/ Comments:

I am concerned about safety in this area after dark. What can be done to discourage illegal activities, like drinking, and inappropriate behavior?

Response: Park hours can be set (dawn till dusk) and enforced by law enforcement agencies, including DNR PRD officers and DNR Conservation officers.

30. Question/ Comment:

What will be done to prevent the park from transforming into a setting for inappropriate juvenile behavior such as sexual conduct and drug use?

Response: Lower branches of some trees will be removed to allow people to see into the site. Local DNR park staff from Baldwin will visit the site twice a week during the summer to insure cleanliness and upkeep. Local law officials can be called if any misbehavior is noticed.

31. Question/ Comment:

How many times a week would the park have supervision and with how many people? What priority would the park be for the DNR to surveillance?

Response: Local DNR staff from Baldwin will visit the site twice a week for maintenance and provide upkeep. Local law officials will have jurisdiction for enforcement issues.